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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 19th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 12 May 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. ADOUKI (Congo)
later: Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland)

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Annual report of the Administrator for 1991 and priority areas identified therein (high-level segment) (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1991 AND PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED THEREIN (HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT) (agenda item 2) (continued) (DP/1992/12 and Add.1, 2, and 4-6)

1. Mr. MOHAPELOA (Lesotho) said that his country pledged its full cooperation to work with its colleagues in the Council towards the attainment of their common goal, namely, to improve the social and economic conditions of the underprivileged populations in the developing countries. The whole world was going through profound changes, impelled by the upsurge of democracy and the restoration of the rule of law in many countries. Those developments were some of the challenges facing UNDP. The Programme should seize the opportunity to mobilize both human and material resources for the benefit of the peoples who should be at the centre of all development efforts.

2. Lesotho was a land-locked country, classified by the United Nations as a least developed country, and without mineral wealth. It attacned great importance to the development of human resources as a basis for the development and exploitation of its water resources, and recognized UNDP's valuable contribution as a leading development agency of the United Nations, in that area. Such contributions, however, constantly came up against new challenges such as the unprecedented drought in eastern and southern Africa. The initiatives taken by UNDP had been welcome and it was to be hoped that they would bear results in the near future and that they would be complemented as well by the donor community.

3. The world economic situation had not favoured the expansion of South-South cooperation. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa for the 1990s contained a set of commitments involving the African countries, the international community and the United Nations system. UNDP's efforts to strengthen its cooperation with those countries were much appreciated, but at the same time it should seek to coordinate its activities with those of other agencies to ensure effective utilization of the limited resources available to the region.

4. Lesotho welcomed the fact that the new member States from the former USSR were benefiting, with other countries, from UNDP assistance and cooperation. As the number of recipient countries continued to increase, the question of resources for development became even more important. There was a need to review other means of assistance, bearing in mind that offered in the area by other institutions and other bilateral assistance. At the same time, there had been a reduction in the level of resources made available to the African countries. Priority should therefore continue to be given to the least developed countries (LDCs).

5. The 1992 Human Development Report contained valuable information and contributed to a greater understanding of economic issues in relation to the human being, but the chapter dealing with the relationship between development and political freedom had not found a consensus among member States and should therefore be discussed further. The Administrator's proposals on restructuring and reorganization of the United Nations system to enhance its effectiveness

in the economic field were welcome. Major changes had been initiated and implemented at various levels. However, it was essential that the individual mandates of the various agencies should be respected.

6. The Administrator had rightly stressed that the effectiveness of any organization depended both on its members and on the availability of resources on a predictable basis. The availability of resources was of crucial importance to the LDCs, and the recent increase in their number from 41 to 47 had significant implications for the resource requirements, and particularly for the allocation of IPF resources for the fifth-programming cycle in which 55 per cent had been allocatted to the LDCs. In view of the increased number of LDCs, there needed to be an upward adjustment in the aid targets and the donor community was urged to mobilize the additional resources needed.

7. Mr. NATHON (Observer for Hungary) said that his delegation attached special importance to the present session as it was convened in the period of emergence of a new world free from the previous East-West and North-South tensions. Hitherto unknown linkages among nations had come into view, requiring a rethinking of international cooperation and a redefinition of the world order. New challenges confronted not only Governments and peoples the world over, but also the United Nations system as a whole, whose potential had not yet been fully utilized. At a time when a number of organizations had joined in providing sophisticated techniques and services to central and eastern European countries, imaginative yet pragmatic policy options were required. They should be country specific and reflect the special needs of the individual nations, since any attempt simply to transfer to them market-economy models that worked satisfactorily elsewhere would not yield the desired results.

8. The new five-year programming cycle which UNDP was about to launch was based on a new philosophy of technical cooperation. The main principles, incorporated in General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 46/218 and in the relevant decisions of the Governing Council, focused on the programme approach and national execution. While subscribing to those principles, which should be considered as long-term objectives, the Hungarian Government also counted on the assistance and expertise of the specialized agencies. It could not discount the possibility, either, of new concepts emerging during the general review of the role of the United Nations system in strengthening economic cooperation. In that context, Hungary sought an improvement in methods of cooperation with UNDP: greater respect for the development priorities of the countries concerned, increased government autonomy in the selection of forms of assistance, better coordination with donors, broader participation of local experts in programme implementation, complete openness in the use of financial resources for projects, an improved atmosphere in inter-agency cooperation and effective application of resources allocated to national capacity building.

9. With UNDP's role expected to expand in central and eastern Europe, Hungary supported its efforts to find additional resources for the new recipient countries or those which had applied for recipient status. IPF allocations for those countries should be based on objective calculations for their development levels, and any United Nations presence should be determined

by rational criteria. The Administrator's decision to establish a separate bureau for Europe and the CIS was welcome. Hungary was ready to share with the new republics the experience it had gained in the process of political and economic transformation and also its knowledge the in area of needs assessment and project formulation. It hoped that the United Nations would recruit experts and advisers from the region as well.

10. Hungary's fifth country programme, which had been submitted to the current session of the Council, focused on the human aspects of development and allowed for funding five times higher than the IPF core funding, which would mean seeking other means of financing. Due to the limited size of Hungary's IPF allocation and the fact that the amount of its voluntary contributions in five years was at least three times as much, the Government did not envisage setting up a UNDP office in the country. Hungary had, however, decided to participate in the UNV programme. All those factors proved that UNDP's activities in Hungary did not by any means imply a diversion of funds allocated for the developing countries. Hungary's recipient status was only expected to be temporary and, on that understanding, the members of the Council were urged to adopt Hungary's country programme for 1992-1996.

11. The management of some of the regional programmes in the fourth cycle and the preparation of the fifth cycle caused some concern. There were several examples of funds being spent inefficiently, of a lack of cooperation and follow-up of missions to various parts of the world and an absence of prior consultation with Governments in negotiations between UNDP and other organizations on certain projects. It was also unfortunate that the regional programme for the fifth-programming cycle for Europe did not include certain rational proposals made during consultative meetings, and that the usual custom of producing a final document on the outcome of the relevant intergovernmental meeting had not been followed. The Hungarian delegation also had reservations about the TAM in that context. It would therefore prefer to postpone a decision on the regional programme until the next session of the Council to enable improvements to be made in those areas.

12. Mr. REGNIER (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that the world food situation was again giving serious cause for concern, food production having fallen short of consumption and cereal stocks being down to minimum acceptable levels. In some regions, particularly in Africa, major efforts would be required in order to avoid widespread famine. The need for expert assistance and the transfer of know-how remained of paramount importance in order to overcome deep-rooted problems of agricultural and food production and preserve the conditions essential for the human development of millions of people. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), within its field of competence, had pioneered a building-up of national capacities - an essential step towards self-reliance - by means of a steady flow of specialized development assistance. Its large programmes of technical assistance had been constantly adapted to meet changing needs and situations. FAO was now placing emphasis on policy advisory work, sector and subsector analysis and strengthened country level support, so as to facilitate programme frameworks and multidisciplinary action. In view of the importance of FAO's activities in partnership with UNDP, as its main executing agency, the financial restraints to which FAO, like other institutions, was subject, had to be clearly recognized.

13. The new support costs arrangements contained both positive aspects and challenges for the future. FAO welcomed the arrangements' emphasis on improved tripartite relations and a strengthened role for agency technical support in UNDP-funded projects and programmes. It was also committed to the principle of increased national execution. Very careful planning and a prudent approach would still be necessary when implementing the complex new arrangements, which would have to be capable of adjustment if necessary. Initial experience suggested the risk of a serious decline in activities and in new projects approved, at least during the first years of the current cycle. Such a downturn could prove much more abrupt for agencies such as FAO, thus weakening the technical component of the programmes and the key role in them of the specialized agencies. The operation of the new arrangements would therefore have to be followed carefully.

14. The latest information indicated a growing increase in projects approved for national execution, to the extent that the Office for Project Services (OPS) would soon become the largest overall executing agent of UNDP funds. FAO welcomed the improvement in national capacities and the new arrangements' emphasis on the agency technical role in support of that process. It had to be recognized, however, that the call for such services had not significantly increased. As had been pointed out on many occasions, the move toward national execution should not be reflected in an expansion of the functions of OPS or of UNDP field offices. Specific and relevant information should be made available on that situation, including an assessment of the involvement of the agencies.

15. A careful and well-prepared shift toward the programme approach in UNDP-funded assistance - in conjunction with the issue of appropriate directives - could have only positive effects on national capacities. Governments must play the predominant role and the support of agencies such as FAO should be built into all stages of the programme process. FAO was in fact ready to cooperate closely in such an approach and could expect to be regarded by UNDP as its natural partner for the necessary sectoral and subsectoral analysis within its fields of competence. The first phase of the technical support services programme would enable participating agencies to strengthen policy advice activities and sectoral support to countries. It was clear, however, that an expansion of those services would be beneficial, so as to permit a more selective approach and greater emphasis on sectoral analysis and policy advisory content. That was something to be borne in mind during the coming round of negotiations on the next phase of the programme.

16. Mr. Breitenstein took the Chair.

17. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the measures taken to reorganize UNDP and rationalize its operations had already borne fruit, since the new arrangements for support costs were to be implemented shortly, efforts were being made to find new ways of building the national capacities of developing countries and UNDP was taking steps to improve the quality of programmes and projects, especially in regard to national execution and the programme approach. Those actions had, however, to be systematic and sustained. Budgetary streamlining, for example, was indispensable, since the forecast resources for the fifth-programming cycle were not very encouraging and savings would clearly

have to be made on the administrative budget. The Administrator had done well in 1991 to cut the UNDP headquarters budget, but further steps would now have to be taken, following the example of the United Nations Secretariat as a whole and reducing the number of posts at the most senior levels; it would also be desirable to resume the practice of recruiting short-term consultants at salaries similar to those of senior level officials, making use of extrabudgetary resources.

18. Improving the governance of United Nations operational activities was also on the United Nations reform agenda. His delegation would confine itself to making one suggestion at the present stage: provision should be made for more frequent informal consultations. It might also be worth inviting members of the Governing Council to some of the meetings of the newly established Policy Planning Committee, especially since the latter was likely to call in outside experts.

19. Assisting developing countries to improve the governance and management of public affairs was another sector in which UNDP could make full use of its advantages as a politically neutral organization. The Administrator's report had indicated that UNDP had already had occasion in some countries to provide support for the electoral process or for its launching. His delegation would advise caution in such cases, since the major responsibility rested with the Department for Political Affairs. UNDP should only become involved in the electoral process in an entirely subordinate role.

20. His delegation supported the idea of allocating a country IPF to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in accordance with the established rules, but the resources made available to UNDP should be used primarily to meet the urgent needs of the developing countries, in particular those of the least developed countries. Nevertheless the CIS countries had carried out fundamental economic and social reforms and UNDP could assist them greatly in areas such as institutional reform, the creation of a private sector, improvement of the public sector and aid management. It was important to recognize that the countries of the CIS and the Baltic States were at different stages of development. In the five Central Asian republics, per capita income and economic infrastructure were at a level to be found in low- and middle-income developing countries. His Government had proposed in OECD's Development Aid Committee that the five Central Asian republics should be qualified for ODA in the same way as other developing countries. On the other hand, the countries in the European region were at a relatively advanced stage of development and had sound economic and social infrastructures. The support extended to the latter countries should be only temporary. With regard to the United Nations presence in those countries, it was particularly important to adopt an integrated approach. The proposal to house a United Nations information centre and a UNDP field office in joint accommodation would not be sufficient in itself. Japan favoured the establishment of an integrated United Nations office and urged the agencies concerned to discuss the matter through the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the JCGP consultation mechanism.

21. Referring to the Human Development Report 1992, he said that, since the appearance of the first report in 1990, the practice had always been to advocate a human-centred development approach, but the Human Development Report should not be merely an academic exercise. It should deal with issues relating directly to UNDP responsibilities. It was encouraging to note that 20 developing countries were now engaged in formulating comprehensive human development strategies, which would translate the concept into concrete form at the national level. The establishment of a "human freedom index" in the 1990 report had caused serious divisions among Member States and there was clearly a need for joint study of that question by the relevant bodies of the United Nations, including the Centre for Human Rights, the Department of Economic and Social Development and UNDP itself.

22. The Human Development Report 1992 had reinforced his delegation's impression that with that document UNDP had gone beyond its original terms of reference. The analysis put forward in the Report was based on unrealistic assumptions, for example that immigration should be totally unrestricted. Its conclusions were accordingly purely speculative. Furthermore, the Report failed to explain what responsibility developing countries themselves had for their own development. The population issue had been neglected, even though it was well known that excessive population growth was one of the major factors hindering development. In addition, the most recent version of the Report contained specific recommendations on reform of the IMF, the World Bank and GATT, and the creation of a United Nations Development Security Council. In his delegation's view UNDP had no mandate to intervene in areas within the competence of other agencies and that academic analyses and proposals should be left to specialist bodies such as the United Nations University. It was not sufficient for the Administrator, as he had done in the foreword to his Report, to issue a simple disclaimer of responsibility since the Human Development Report was after all an official UNDP publication. A major change of orientation was required before the publication of the next edition, which should address development questions closely linked to areas of UNDP competence.

23. His delegation had been gratified to witness the extension of cooperative relations between UNDP and the Government of Japan. Very shortly, the two partners would jointly chair the Ministerial Conference on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia. His Government had also for many years maintained cordial working relations with the United Nations Capital Development Fund. The United Nations Volunteers Programme enjoyed growing support from Governments and United Nations agencies and his Government also gave that programme well merited support; he hoped to see the Volunteers actively promoting TCDC and the sharing of experience among grass-root organizations and community support institutions.

24. Mr. ELIASSON (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator) commended UNDP on its constructive role in development and stressed the importance of General Assembly resolution 46/182, which gave the United Nations a new mandate and new means in the field of emergency humanitarian assistance. That should facilitate coordination of the efforts made by the various bodies active in that field, including the Red Cross and the many NGOs which provided the United Nations with generous financial support and valuable assistance.

25. The establishment of a Central Emergency Revolving Fund, together with other measures taken under resolution 46/182, would enable the competent bodies in the system to react rapidly in emergencies. It would be a complementary funding mechanism that would provide them with reimbursable funds. The fund was expected to become operational at the level of $50 million within the next few weeks.

26. The General Assembly had also stressed that emergency aid should be followed by reconstruction and long-term development. Prevention, preparedness, relief, rehabilitation and development constituted the links of the same chain. In that respect, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs had undertaken to cooperate with, inter alia, UNDP, the Department of Economic and Social Development, the World Bank and IMF. It must, however, be realized that without the cooperation of the afflicted countries, it would be extremely difficult to proceed from humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation and then development.

27. In some areas of the world, efforts at national reconciliation, after many years of civil war, were beginning to bear fruit and the United Nations was called upon to assist in national reconstruction. The UNDP had an essential role to play, particularly in the coordination of the system's activities. In that regard, he noted that his department had joined UNDP, UNHCR and other competent bodies in a regular dialogue to improve the cohesiveness of future returnee programmes.

28. The demands upon the United Nations system were growing, but there was a lack of funds. It was therefore necessary to cooperate and pool all available resources. Together with the countries immediately affected, the United Nations system should plan a strategy that took advantage of the support from contributors to advance social and economic well-being.

29. With particular regard to prevention, preparedness and early warning, UNDP was already doing extremely useful work. Thus, in collaboration with UNDRO, it had established a system-wide disaster management training programme and was preparing a manual on the subject. Many other activities were under way in that field (a survey of major emergency stockpiles around the world, so that the United Nations could rapidly deploy essential supplies when needed; preparation of rosters of emergency specialists; refinement of rapid response procedures in several agencies, etc.). All those steps were in the right direction, since disaster preparedness not only helped to protect human lives but also protected the development process.

30. At its most recent session, the General Assembly had recognized that emergency relief required concerted efforts. In that regard, he pointed out that a network of partners had been set up to address the terrible drought affecting southern Africa. The United Nations was also cooperating closely with the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADDC) in drawing up a relief programme and preparing the launching of a joint appeal. A pledging conference was to be held at Geneva in early June, and concrete action could start soon thereafter.

31. That example showed that the new Department of Humanitarian Affairs could launch and coordinate a complex emergency operation without, of course, intervening directly or encroaching on the mandates of the competent bodies. It was a question of helping people in distress and of seeing to it that ongoing development efforts were not delayed. The World Bank and the IMF were cooperating actively in that common effort, which augured well for future assistance and development activities. In situations of that nature, cooperation between the United Nations, regional organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions, Governments and NGOs should be the rule rather than the exception.

32. The UNDP Resident Coordinators played a major role in the organization of assistance at the national level. Like the Resident Representatives, they demonstrated remarkable competence and commitment. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs intended to collaborate closely with them. UNDP and the Department clearly had a common responsibility. General Assembly resolution 46/182 made abundantly clear the need for UNDP's close involvement in emergency relief work, rehabilitation and development. It had already demonstrated its effectiveness in that field and the Department was certain that fruitful cooperation would be established between the two bodies.

33. The upheavals that had taken place in the world gave rise to great hopes, even if the future of humanity was full of unknown peril. Poverty would not be overcome overnight but effective emergency assistance could dispel the desperation of those affected and give development efforts meaningful momentum. "Humanitarian diplomacy" could open up new avenues and make it possible to strike a balance between respect for national sovereignty and the need to help people in distress. Humanitarian and socio-economic issues were one and the same. A judicious combination of solidarity and enlightened self-interest should make it possible to take a great step forward and promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

34. Mr. EDELMAN (United States of America) said that, faced with the dramatic changes taking place in the world, the United Nations had finally initiated the long-awaited reform and restructuring of the system. UNDP also should evolve. The Human Development Report echoed a good number of those changes and that publication had stimulated critical development analyses concerning the meaning of development, its impact on individuals and how best to achieve it. The Report had established UNDP as a leader in conceptualizing development issues. Analysing the linkage between human development and human freedom was not only timely, but crucial to giving UNDP a long-needed profile and to sustaining its financial support. His delegation strongly encouraged UNDP to continue that work, independently of the politicized atmosphere that too often permeated development debates.

35. The United States viewed UNDP's role as coordinator of the United Nations system of technical assistance and operational activities for development as more important than ever. Other multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, were attracting resources and building capacity to provide both technical assistance and development coordination. UNDP and the United Nations

system must strengthen and steamline their complementary capacity in those areas. UNDP must, first of all, assist member States in mounting integrated and mutually reinforcing approaches to development problems. His delegation would study very carefully the appealing proposals made by the Administrator for an integrated United Nations field structure.

36. Essentially, UNDP would face four tests that would influence its future: extending its reach to new States, which would soon begin to broaden the definition of "developing country"; fostering development that respected the environment; demonstrating the inseparable link between democratic institutions and economic progress; and intensifying investment in the capacity of Governments to meet the major challenges ahead, such as AIDS. Those new issues would necessitate the taking of difficult decisions by the Council.

37. The preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) had advanced the understanding of the environmental issues inherent in the development process. Addressing environmental issues in development planning had become a necessity. Wise management of natural resources was fundamental to the long-term effectiveness of any development undertaking. UNDP should contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into all aspects of the development planning process. The guidelines for environmental management and sustainable development should be revised to reflect the most current information on the subject and UNDP would have to be an active participant in the inter-agency coordination arrangements to be established to follow up on UNCED.

38. Noting that the AIDS epidemic threatened catastrophe for the development prospects of many countries and that the field level action had so far been inadequate, his delegation stressed that the cooperative efforts and complementary interventions of UNDP and WHO, as well as of other United Nations partners such as UNICEF and UNFPA, were essential to help developing countries to mount national responses to the AIDS problem. The year 1992 offered the opportunity to provide explicit guidance to each of those organizations on the roles that they were expected to play. UNDP must assist Governments to galvanize national attention and mobilize national resources to confront the epidemic.

39. It was encouraging to note that UNDP had reduced its administrative budget projections, but it must take other measures to bring the rate of growth of the administrative budget within that of the programme budget. While the modalities of assistance to the new independent States could be diverse and should be drawn up by the Governments concerned and the Administrator, it was essential to stress the need for their efficiency. In that regard, his delegation attached considerable importance to the continuity and coherence of administrative arrangements and to the improvement of coordination and cooperation within the system. Noting that the current situation was not reassuring, it counted on very clear improvements in that field. On the question of the allocation of resources, it was essential to adhere to the principles underlying the decision on the fifth-programming cycle and to maintain reserves for contingencies and base planning on realistic expectations.

40. With regard to humanitarian emergency assistance, his Government was not persuaded that UNDP had overcome the problems of planning and implementation related to refugee/returnee aid and long-term development, and it encouraged the programme to improve substantially its capacity in that field.

41. Lastly, with regard to technical assistance, it was not sufficient to replace one term by another and to speak of "national capacity-building" in order to resolve the question of the ineffectiveness of such assistance. In view of the unprecedented complexity of the problems afflicting the developing countries, it was essential that UNDP should pay greater attention to developing the national skills and domestic sources of financial support that alone would ensure the long-term development of those countries.

42. The United States looked forward to working with the Governing Council, the Administrator and the UNDP staff in charting an effective multilateral course of action that would provide UNDP with a framework for meeting the new challenges that were arising.

43. Mr. SEMICHI (Algeria) stressed the magnitude, the complexity and the urgency of the problems of development and welcomed the efforts being made to enhance the effectiveness of the development activities of the United Nations system. The imaginative solutions proposed by the Administrator would go a long way towards attaining that objective. The elimination of poverty continued to be one of the international community's priority tasks. The proposed new orientations for technical cooperation were therefore most welcome. Because of its universality, neutrality and flexibility the United Nations system had undeniable advantages in its development activities, in being able to offer solutions that were consistent with national priorities and enabled the countries themselves to take over the technical assistance management. UNDP should therefore continue to harmonize and simplify its procedures so as to facilitate national project execution. To that end the decisions on arrangements for agency support costs were welcome.

44. Due to a number of external factors, Algeria's economy had declined and its terms of trade had deteriorated since 1985. It had undertaken a wide-ranging programme of economic reform, which had been accelerated since 1988, with a view to establishing a market economy. Assistance was needed in that difficult transition and it was to be hoped that UNDP could draw on the technical cooperation capacity of the United Nations system and mobilize the financial resources needed for implementation of Algeria's sixth programme. National execution would be introduced gradually and selectively.

45. It was regrettable that the Human Development Report continued to cause controversy. UNDP should keep to its main function and allow human development to form an integral part of the overall development process. The measures to promote employment, to secure the involvement of women in development and to ensure the welfare of the elderly and disabled could help to cushion the effects of structural adjustment on the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

46. With regard to the environment, Algeria fully endorsed the views of the Administrator and the measures taken by UNDP at the regional and international levels. It was also ready to contribute fully to the Global Environment Facility. In view of the various ecological problems facing Algeria, his delegation hoped that UNDP would strengthen its capacity in national resource management and environmental protection through specific cooperation activities in the form of high-level study and consultation.

47. In view of the reduced flow of funds to Africa which was impeding its development and economic revival, UNDP's decision to continue to give priority to Africa and the most needy countries was welcome and it was to be hoped that that decision would lead to the mobilization of adequate resources. The decision to coordinate the activities of the Regional Bureau for Africa and the Regional Bureau for Arab States to promote recovery in Africa was also welcome.

48. Mr. AKTAN (Observer for Turkey) said that the United Nations system was well placed to translate into a programme of action the new opportunities for international cooperation brought about by the changes in international relations, as well as the new hopes for socio-economic development and democracy. The reorientation of the organization's operational activities would enable it to serve those needs more effectively. The Turkish delegation agreed with the principles set out in the Administrator's annual report and which formed the basis of UNDP's new orientations for technical cooperation. With regard to national execution, all UNDP-financed projects in Turkey were coordinated by Turkish nationals, with assistance from United Nations experts where necessary. The transfer of programme-related functions to the country level would facilitate a more efficient and swifter response to countries' needs and the establishment of a single United Nations country office under the authority of a coordinator might well be the best way of strengthening coordination and harmonization of operational activities.

49. However, the poor would not benefit from any reform unless both national and external, human and material resources were commensurate with the extent of the problems. Nothing could replace national efforts. Countries which were implementing the right reforms could enjoy the benefits of regional and global cooperation as well as the assistance of the United Nations. Turkey was a case in point, albeit an imperfect one. For 12 years it had been implementing a free market policy, collaborating with Iran and Pakistan within the framework of an economic cooperation organization, and had initiated cooperation between the Black Sea countries in spite of political problems.

50. The newly independent States, especially those in central Asia, lacked management experience and urgently needed assistance in that area. As a number of those countries had the characteristics of a developing country, it would be more appropriate to design country-specific assistance programmes for them. UNDP was in the best position to extend multilateral assistance to them. Turkey therefore reiterated its proposal that the Ankara Bureau be reinforced as a base for UNDP activities in the countries concerned should it prove impossible to establish a UNDP field presence there.

51. UNDP should continue to support TCDC activities. On account of its rapidly growing economy and technological know-how, Turkey played a significant role in that area and intended to identify new areas of activity to develop that modality and to strengthen its cooperation with the developing countries and the republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

52. Turkey was not a resource-rich country and therefore had always attached importance to human development. It had pioneered that movement in organizing round tables in 1983, in cooperation with UNDP. The 1992 Report, although much better than the preceding one, still had its shortcomings due to the lack of a reliable social model and a common definition of a developed human being, and also due to the grouping together of countries with very different characteristics. It was to be hoped that future reports would be more discriminating in that respect.

53. Mr. HUDON (Canada) said that there had been a great improvement in the quality, focus and impact of the programmes of UNDP, and the Programme was in fact taking the lead as a purveyor of ideas in the area of development and as a focal point for human capital formation. The Human Development Report had had a noticeable effect on the debate on constitutional reform in Canada, and would undoubtedly also provide other countries with food for thought.

54. UNDP's future would be greatly influenced by two particular issues, the approach to environmental problems and overall reform of the United Nations system. In the area of the environment, it was to be hoped that UNDP would have an important role to play following the Rio Conference. In any event, all its future programmes, whether economic, social, political, cultural or environmental, should aim at sustainable development. UNDP's progress had been encouraging so far and it should continue to make further effort particularly in the area of policy formulation, to help recipient countries develop the capacity to tackle their serious ecological problems.

55. The question of major reform of the United Nations development system as a whole was gaining ground. A system with some 133 autonomous and sometimes competitive elements could not be expected to achieve its task either efficiently or effectively and could only complicate the development planning of the recipient countries and dissipate scarce development funds. There was no scarcity of new reform initiatives, such as, the Nordic project, recent changes in the United Nations Secretariat, efforts to improve the structure of the Economic and Social Council, and the intriguing proposal for a Development Security Council contained in the last Human Development Report. However, what was needed was a substantial reduction in the number of programmes, committees and trust funds, a single, powerful and effective development governance body with boards and secretariats with the executive authority to disseminate and implement policy throughout the system. That model was, generally speaking, commensurate with the proposals in the Nordic project and the Human Development Report 1992, and would preserve UNDP's key role. In that regard the Canadian delegation unreservedly approved the prospects for the future as outlined by the Administrator in his introductory statement to the high-level debate and it fully endorsed his five points. It also endorsed his wishes to direct UNDP action upstream towards policy dialogue and programme formulation within the context of the development process.

56. In spite of the system problems, which were reflected in the conceptual shortcomings of UNFPA's proposal to set up regional technical offices to implement the successor support costs system, the United Nations development system had one advantage in that its assistance was focused on a maximum of two or three sectors in each country and was linked to the principal strategic objectives of each body, such as the six new orientations of UNDP. It was to be hoped that United Nations technical assistance would continue to advise Governments on policy formulation and would focus on the development of skills and the strengthening of institutions in the interest of sustainable development. United Nations activity in that area did not appear to have produced the desired results and it was to be hoped that UNDP's programmes would have far greater repercussions once the programme approach was fully implemented.

57. Mr. CARVAJO (Spain) said that he fully endorsed the statement made by the Portuguese delegation on behalf of the European Community, particularly with regard to the need for effective coordination of the work of the entire United Nations system. For some years, Spain had been seeking to play a more active role in international cooperation for development, particularly at the multilateral level. It had, for instance, substantially increased its contributions to the various United Nations programmes and bodies, and especially to UNDP. Since 1991, it had been an active member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee.

58. His country attached great importance to the new orientations for technical cooperation outlined in the Administrator's report, which should focus essentially on the concepts of human development and sustainable development. An essential element was the programme approach based on national development objectives and national execution, upon which the fifth-programming cycle had been built. In view of the great inequalities between developing countries, Spain approved the priority given to the LDCs. Following the example of the meetings between African planning ministers, a conference between Latin American and Caribbean ministers and directors planning had just been held in Madrid. The outcome had been encouraging both in terms of the attainment of technical cooperation objectives and in terms of financial planning and the social dimensions of structural adjustment.

59. The recent strengthening of United Nations humanitarian structures reflected an awareness of the need to react more quickly to emergencies and disasters. Because of its field presence, UNDP had an important role to play in organizing funds and programmes in cooperation with other bodies, and establishing a more effective presence in such areas as the Horn of Africa or southern Africa. There were many examples in Latin America of good cooperation between bilateral donors, UNHCR and UNDP, and in particular the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America. In cooperation with UNDP, Spain was supporting the Latin American Centre of Administration for Development (CLAD) which aimed to consolidate political, economic and social structures in the democratic States of the region. UNDP also played an important part in the implementation of the Commitment of Tegucigalpa and the Mexico Agreements for strengthening peace in El Salvador. The experience acquired in Central America might be extended to other regions of the world.

60. Spain was in favour of UNDP lending assistance to the newly independent States of central and eastern Europe, provided that its role was clearly defined. UNCED would no doubt clarify UNDP's role in environmental matters. The third Human Development Report provided a good basis for discussion, in spite of its many inevitable shortcomings. However, if it were improved in both form and substance, and translated, it could be used by all Governments as a basis for their economic and social policies.

61. Mr. BISLEY (New Zealand) said that virtually all the major problems of the world were transnational in character and required cooperation at the global level. The United Nations system was more than ever the place where those problems could be solved by a collective effort of political will. The 1992 Report on Human Development had emphasized interdependence and had elucidated the concept by demonstrating that the adoption by all countries of market-opening policies would promote a "virtuous cycle" of trade, investment and economic growth. As a small country, New Zealand relied on access to overseas markets and agreed with the authors of the Report that the impetus for trade liberalization came mainly from the developing countries. Trade restrictions in industrial countries reduced the GNP of developing countries by one and a half times the total size of ODA flows. Mutually advantageous market opening required measures at the national level complemented by actions at the multilateral level. Only some 7 per cent of world trade was conducted in full conformity with the founding principles of GATT so that a positive outcome to the Uruguay negotiations was important and urgent. Such a result would lead to even greater interdependence with ramifications which would involve the operational activities of organizations such as UNDP. Small countries, for example, would be in a better position to increase their contributions to the Programme and to improve their own aid target performance.

62. New Zealand had always strongly supported the activities of UNDP in Asia and the Pacific, particularly its recent efforts to assist aid coordination in the South Pacific. Regarding the future, the scope of the needs and the modest scale of available resources called for a rigorous setting of priorities, as in the case of the new integrated United Nations offices in the CIS countries. UNDP had also been called upon to increase its action in the environmental field. It would not however be able to retain its leadership in that field unless it worked even harder to fulfil the role UNCED was expected to give it in the implementation of Agenda 21. The Conference might also make the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) a principal mechanism for global environment funding. It was essential that UNDP should continue to play a leading role in GEF and that the management structure of the Facility should be broadened. It was essential to reduce the prohibitively high entry fee for participation in the Facility which was a disincentive to its universality. During the preparations for the Conference UNDP had also been identified as having a capital role in capacity building and institutional support because of its comparative advantage in that field. Its work would be facilitated if countries formulated action plans for sustainable development and identified a framework for future activities.

63. New Zealand was pleased to see that UNDP was implementing General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the extent to which UNDP had succeeded would be reviewed during the forthcoming triennial review of United Nations development activities. UNDP's steady insistence on defining its comparative advantage more clearly was very worthwhile. As the study by the Nordic countries pointed out, the Programme could help developing countries to establish and coordinate technical assistance priorities and objectives. The formulation of programme frameworks, currently lacking, required a coordinated approach among all the agencies and must be consistent with capacity building objectives. In the field of humanitarian assistance, the activities of the United Nations would gain in transparency and effectiveness following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 46/182, which had clarified UNDP's role and reaffirmed the central role of Resident Coordinators.

64. Mr. ALMADA (Observer for Argentina) noted that UNDP had been able to adapt itself to world developments without losing sight of the principles enunciated in the 1970 consensus: neutrality, universality and voluntarism. At the beginning of the fifth-programming cycle, the sole criterion applicable to technical cooperation concerned goals and national development plans while the prime responsibility for technical cooperation always remained with the national authorities; bearing in mind national development needs, UNDP enjoyed unquestionable comparative advantages in the field as was evident from its success. In Argentina in particular it had concentrated on strengthening national capacity in the management and implementation of priority activities and it had made a solid contribution to the policies of structural reform and stabilization adopted by the public authorities.

65. UNDP should continue to give priority to the requests of recipient countries in terms of flexible procedures adapted to the particular situation of developing countries and should formulate its programmes in a pragmatic manner. Argentina supported the principle of national execution and had made substantial progress in that direction with the support and collaboration of UNDP's field offices. The United Nations system should be decentralized at the country level so that field offices could respond rapidly to requests and the role of the Resident Coordinator should be strengthened.

66. During the current session the Governing Council would have before it Argentina's fifth national programme which involved a sustained effort of deregulation, administrative rationalization, stabilization and the freeing of markets. The programme was based on three elements: support for economic growth, strengthening of the management capacity of the State and the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes designed to improve living conditions. Each of those elements comprised several themes: preservation of the environment, environmental impact of projects, the role of women in development and horizontal cooperation by means of South-South exchanges between Argentina and other countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. Argentina's fifth programme continued to give priority to national execution and would take advantage of UNDP's international sources of information and know-how in its requests for high-level technical assistance and when it needed to supplement national human resources.

67. Argentina attached great importance to horizontal cooperation, which assured the transfer of experience and know-how between developing countries and it had accordingly initiated two projects: on the one hand, within the framework of UNDP, a project of support for TCDC provided by Argentina to other countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe, to which it had allocated resources from its IPF as well as funds of its own. On the other hand, at the regional level, it had set up an Argentine fund for horizontal cooperation within the Organization of American States; activities benefiting member countries would be undertaken in the educational, scientific and cultural sectors as well as in the socio-economic field. Those two initiatives would facilitate the sending of missions of Argentine experts and consultants to requesting countries as well as certain training activities in Argentina itself.

68. The countries of Latin America had found in integration a technical, economic and political response to a number of their problems. Particular mention should be made of the MERCOSUR initiative taken at the subregional level by Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil and Argentina. Argentina hoped that some of the cooperation projects being developed in that context would attract the attention of UNDP. All the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean hoped moreover that UNDP and also the other United Nations agencies and the developed countries would give practical support to the process of integration and cooperation which they had started.

69. The 1992 Report on Human Development, which examined the international dimensions of human development, had shown how emigration policies, trade barriers and debt had widened the gap between the rich and the poor nations. One of the great lessons to be learned from recent decades was that the best means of promoting human development involved the opening of markets and tolerance of competition. That provided openings for enterprises and producers and offered the individual a much wider range of economic choices. While the markets of developing countries were opening, however, other international markets remained closed. The Report analysed those problems in a human context on the assumption that markets were the means and human development was the end. His delegation considered that some methodological aspects of the calculation of the proposed indicators could be improved but the criticism contained in the Report regarding external obstacles which stood in the way of national economic growth was nevertheless useful.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.